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FOR NEA/ARP

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TAGS: PGOV PHUM YM

SUBJECT: ROYG TRIES NEW PRESS CONTROL TECHNIQUE -- BEGGING

REF: A) SANAA 1625 B) SANAA 1586 C) SANAA 1831

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen A. Seche for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(C) London-based Arabic language website "Aden Press" reported on November 4 that Bashraheel Hisham Bashraheel, international news editor of Aden-based opposition paper Al-Ayyam, was detained by Political Security personnel while interviewing a group of British tourists. When contacted by the embassy, Bashraheel confirmed that he had been "harassed and detained" for five or six hours by Political Security forces. He went on to say that the Political Security Office in Aden "begged" him not to report the incident in his newspaper. (Note: The story was not reported anywhere in the official Yemeni media on November 4. End Note.)

Comment. That a journalist was harassed and detained in Yemen is no longer newsworthy. It is just another in a string of harassment incidents (refrels). What is interesting is that the Political Security Office pleaded with him not to report the incident. This indicates that at least some in the ROYG have learned that harassing journalists is not generally acceptable and is something to be hidden, and further, that intimidation alone is increasingly ineffective in silencing journalists. On the other hand, the comparatively gentle treatment Bashraheel received might reflect the status of his family, which is wealthy and influential.

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